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Message Text

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70
ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 AID-05 L-03 CPR-01 PER-01 SS-15 SP-02

NSC-05 MMO-01 A-01 /045 W
---------- 024302
R 191412Z FEB 76
FM AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6321

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: APER EAID PFOR US SY
SUBJ: SARG REQUEST FOR REDUCTION IN US DIPLOMATIC PERSONNEL

REF: (A) STATE 31632, (B) DAMASCUS 550

1. FOLLOWING RECEIPT STATE 31632, EMBASSY DISCUSSED STATUS OF AID PERSONNEL FURTHER WITH FOREIGN MINISTRY CHIEF OF PROTOCOL NAHLAWI. NAHLAWI SAID HIS DISCUSSIONS ON MATTER WITH MINISTRY OF PLANNING HAD BEEN INCONCLUSIVE. FOR FOREIGN MINISTRY, ESSENTIAL QUESTION NOW IS WHETHER OLD AID AGREEMENT WITH UAR IS STILL VALID. OPINION OF FOREIGN MINISTRY LEGAL DEPT IS THAT IF ANY OF THE ACTIVITIES FOR WHICH OLD AGREEMENT CONCLUDED ARE CONTINUING, THEN AGREEMENT IS STILL IN EFFECT; IF NOT, THEN AGREEMENT SHOULD BE CONSIDERED AS HAVING LAPSED. SINCE OPINION POSES QUESTION OF FACT FOR SARG ECONOMIC MINISTRIES TO ANSWER, FOREIGN MINISTRY HAS SENT ITS DOSSIER AND ITS LEGAL OPINION TO DEPPRIMIN FOR ECONOMIC AFFIARS HAYDAR FOR FURTHER ACTION.

2. EMBOFF POINTED OUT THAT THIS DID NOT SOLVE IMMEDIATE QUESTION OF STATUS OF AID PERSONNEL ALREADY PRESENT AND WORKING IN SYRIA, NOR WOULD POSITIVE ANSWER FROM HAYDAR'S OFFICE SOLVE QUESTION OF IMMUNITIES FOR AID PERSONNEL WHICH NOT TREATED IN OLD AGREEMENT. NAHLAWI SAID HE WAS UNWILLING TO ADDRESS
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THESE POINTS UNTIL HAYDAR'S REPLY RECEIVED.

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3. NAHLAWI ADMITTED THAT SITUATION POSED PROBLEM
RE ISSUANCE OF ID CARDS TO AID PERSONNEL CARRYING
DIPLOMATIC PASSPORTS SINCE MINISTRY OF INTERIOR
ISSUES ID CARDS ONLY TO HOLDERS OF REGULAR OR OFFICIAL
PASSPORTS AND FOREIGN MINISTRY ISSUED ID CARDS ONLY
TO ACCREDITED DIPLOMATS. HE SUGGESTED EMBASSY
PREPARE "IDENTIFICATION LETTER" WITH PHOTOGRAPH OF
INDIVIDUAL WHICH FOREIGN MINISTRY COULD THEN "LEGALIZE."

4. GIVEN THIS SITUATION, MUST RECOMMEND THAT ALL
AID PERSONNEL ASSIGNED TO DAMASCUS CONTINUE TO
BE ISSUED DIPLOMATIC PASSPORTS UNTIL NEW BILATERAL
IS CONCLUDED AND ENTERS INTO EFFECT. DIPLOMATIC
PASSPORT, PLUS IDENTIFICATION LETTER AS SUGGESTED BY
NAHLAWI, WILL AFFORD A SUFFICIENT AND PRACTICAL DEGREE
OF PROTECTION DURING INTERIM PERIOD. UNDER NEW
ACCORD, WOULD EXPECT ALL AID PERSONNEL (EXCEPT AID
REP RAMSEY) EVENTUALLY TO CARRY OFFICIAL PASSPORTS. MEANWHILE,
WE WILL CONTINUE TO PUSH FOR FULLEST POSSIBLE
PROTECTION PROVISION IN NEW BILATERAL, WITHIN
STATED SARG GUIDELINES THAT WE MAY EXPECT TO
RECEIVE "NO MORE AND NO LESS3 THAN OTHER NATIONS'
ASSISTANCE MISSIONS IN DAMASCUS.

5. IN RELATED ACTION, CHIEF OF PROTOCOL NAHLAWI
DENIED EMBASSY REQUEST TO IMPORT FIVE ADDITIONAL
VEHICLES UNDER CD REGISTRATION. MINISTRY'S POSITION,
HE EMPHATICALLY STATED, WAS THAT IT WOULD ALLOW
MAXIMUM OF 17 CD REGISTERED CARS TO EMBASSY. NAHLAWI
POINTED OUT THAT DIPLOMATIC MISSIONS WERE NORMALLY
LIMITED TO FIVE OFFICIAL CD CARS AND ADDITIONS OVER
THAT NUMBER WERE GRANTED AT DISCRETION OF MINISTRY
ON BASIS OF SIZE OF AN EMBASSY'S DIPLOMATIC STAFF.
GIVEN LIMIT OF 22 DIPLOMATIC STAFF FOR AMERICAN
EMBASSY, 17 OFFICIAL VEHICLES SEEMED MORE THAN ADEQUATE
IN MINISTRY'S VIEW.

6. ALTHOUGH NOT STATED IN OUR REQUEST, THESE FIVE
VEHICLES WERE FOR AID AND WE NOW FACE PROBLEM OF
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ARRANGING THEIR DUTY-FREE ENTRY BY OTHER MEANS.
UNLESS SATISFACTORY AD HOC ARRANGEMENT CAN BE MADE
THROUGH MINISTRY OF PLANNING, WE WILL HAVE TO AWAIT
FINAL SARG DECISION ON VALIDITY OF OLD AGREMENT
BEFORESYRIAN CUSTOMS WILL CLEAR THESE VEHICLES.
WE HOPE, HOWEVER, IMPORT AID REP'S ARMORED SEDAN UNDER 17
VEHICLE EMBASSY QUOTA; IF NEED BE, BY
SELLING ONE OF OLDEST CURRENT EMBASSY MOTORPOOL

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VEHICLES FOR WHICH REPLACEMENT HAS ALREADY BEEN
RECEIVED.
MURPHY

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: DIPLOMATIC PERSONNEL, PERSONNEL MOVEMENTS, DIPLOMATIC TITLES
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 19 FEB 1976
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: morefirh
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1976DAMASC00897
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D760063-0508
From: DAMASCUS
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1976/newtext/t19760236/aaaabfae.tel
Line Count: 118
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION NEA
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 76 STATE 31632, 76 DAMASCUS 550
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: morefirh
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 21 JUN 2004
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <21 JUN 2004 by ellisoob>; APPROVED <02 JUL 2004 by morefirh>
Review Markings:

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EO Systematic Review
04 MAY 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: SARG REQUEST FOR REDUCTION IN US DIPLOMATIC PERSONNEL
TAGS: APER, EAID, PFOR, US, SY
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006